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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STOCKHOLM 000691

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [TU](#) [EUN](#) [AF](#) [SW](#)  
SUBJECT: SWEDISH LEFT PARTY'S FOREIGN POLICY GOALS: TROOPS  
OUT OF AFGHANISTAN, MORE PRESSURE ON ISRAEL

REF: A. STOCKHOLM 686  
[1](#)B. STOCKHOLM 86  
[1](#)C. 2008 STOCKHOLM 848

Classified By: PolCouns Marc Koehler for reasons 1.4 (B) & (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On November 4, MP Hans Linde, the Left Party's foreign affairs spokesman, gave poloff a preview of his party's policy priorities, including on labor rights and Afghanistan -- two issues which are obstacles to consensus within the opposition Red-Green Coalition. Coalition parties -- the Social Democrats, Greens and Left -- meet weekly to discuss policy differences, but will not be ready to present publicly their joint platform for the September 2010 general elections until early next year (Ref B). The Left wants to pull Swedish troops out of Afghanistan and wants Sweden to put more pressure on Israel. Linde serves on the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and on the board of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, the longest-serving foreign NGO in Afghanistan. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The Left Party's main policy priorities include labor rights and gender equality, and for many decades the Left has worked successfully on these issues with Sweden's largest political party, the Social Democrats (SDP). With such a history, Linde said building consensus on most domestic issues will not be problematic -- a sentiment echoed by SDP International Secretary Ann Linde (no relation). However, building a common platform on foreign policy and immigration/integration issues will be challenging. The Left Party -- formerly the Communist Party of Sweden -- is still sympathetic to the plight of workers in other countries, but now is concerned that further liberalization of Sweden's generous immigration laws threatens the current high level of Swedish workers' rights and benefits. Linde said the Left has never cooperated with another party on immigration and that it is unlikely the Red-Green Coalition will reach consensus on the issue. In fact, the SDP have more in common with the governing Moderate Party than with the Left, he said.

[1](#)3. (C) Linde said Left Party members are keenly aware of global issues and many joined the party because they opposed the Vietnam War and apartheid in South Africa. Newer members joined out of opposition to military intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the "marginalization" of Palestine. These issues are a "big part" of Left Party identity and the Left is therefore, according to Linde, limited in its ability to compromise with the SDP. The Left has never formally cooperated with other parties on foreign affairs. Ironically, foreign policy tends to "mobilize" Left Party members into action more than any other issues, Linde commented.

[1](#)4. (C) On Afghanistan, the Left wants Swedish troops out and "civilian support to replace military support." Linde cited the successes of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan implementing its aid program for over 30 years, especially in southern Afghanistan. Within the Red-Green Coalition, Afghanistan is such a contentious issue that Linde is

pessimistic that consensus will be formed before the election (Ref B). The Left wants a new strategy that includes a clear timetable for Sweden's military withdrawal, although it has not proposed a specific date and instead wants to arrive at an agreed date with the other Coalition parties. In contrast, the SDP supports troops in Afghanistan at least through 2010 (Ref A). In any case, as the issue is not expected to play a large role in the elections, the Red-Green Coalition will focus on labor issues in the run-up to the polls.

¶15. (C) Linde asserted that Sweden's large Palestinian diaspora heavily influences Swedish policy toward the Middle East. The Left wants a more "equitable" foreign policy between Israel and the Palestinians and Linde is sure that the Red-Green Coalition will reach consensus in this area prior to the election. He stated that the Left supports the "Norwegian Model" of direct dialogue with Hamas and increased pressure on Israel to end the Gaza blockade and allow unrestricted humanitarian aid into Palestine. The Coalition will also push for an import ban on Israeli-made arms (although the actual numbers are low) as a symbolic statement.

¶16. (C) If elected, the Red-Green Coalition would focus on improving the EU's "social dimension," including labor market and trade union reforms. There will be no referendum on the Euro under a Red-Green government, but Linde is positive the governing coalition would hold a referendum if reelected. As to Turkey, all seven of the major parties in Sweden support Turkey's EU accession and the Red-Green Coalition would continue to push for this in Brussels.

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¶17. (C) Comment: The Left Party holds only 22 seats in the 349-member Parliament, as opposed to the 130 seats of the largest party, the SDP. But the importance that the SDP places on opposition party unity heading into the elections will give the Left disproportionate influence on Red-Green policies (Ref C).  
BARZUN